

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 KHARTO 03737 141221Z  
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
ACDA-12 IO-13 /089 W  
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R 141115Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8158

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 3737

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MOPS, ET, SU  
SUBJECT: OSMAN SALEH SABBE, ELF-PLF; EPLF CLAIMS

1. AMERICAN REPORTED JOHN DUGGAN TAPED FOUR AND ONE-HALF HOUR CONVERSATION WITH OSMAN SALEH SABBE ON AUGUST 11 IN KHARTOUM. DUGGAN SAID OSMAN ELF-PLF LEADER IS /OPTIMISTIC" IN THAT HE EXPECTS ELF-PLF TO EMERGE AS PRINCIPAL ERITREAN ORGANIZATION IN LONG RUN. OSMAN SAID HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND WHY WESTERN POWERS DO NOT RECOGNIZE ELF-PLF AS ONLY PRO-WESTERN ERITREAN FORCE WITH REASONABLE PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE.

2. OSMAN SAID EPLF IS NOT INTERESTED IN QUICK END TO FIGHTING. EPLF REQUIRES LONG WAR TO PROMOTE THEIR SOCIAL REVOLUTION WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PEACE TO EPLF LEADERSHIP. MOST EPLF LEADERS HAVE JOINED FIGHT SINCE 1975 AND LACK MUCH EXPERIENCE OF WAR. ELF ON OTHER HAND IS NOW FRAGMENTING, WITH LEFTISTS JOINING EPLF AND RIGHTWING JOINING OSMAN'S GROUP. ELF IN KHARTOUM IS WRACKED BY RECRIMINATIONS AND IS PURGING MANY OFFICIALS. OSMAN SAID ELF-PLF HAS BETTER SOURCES OF MONEY AND WEAPONS THAN OTHERS. AFTER ELF AND EPLF HAVE EXHAUSTED THEMSELVES, ELF-PLF WILL REMAIN ALONE IN FIELD AGAINST ETHIOPIA.

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3. DUGGAN NOTED OSMAN HAS AT LEAST FOUR OFFICES IN KHARTOUM AT SEPARATE LOCATIONS, IN ADDITION TO OFFICES AT KASSALA AND FAMILY HOME IN DAMASCUS. DUGGAN OFTEN FINDS SUDANESE SECURITY OFFICERS LINGERING AT ELF-PLF HEADQUARTERS FOR FREINDLY VISITS OVER COFFEE, BUT SUCH CLOSE RELATIONS DO NOT EXIST WITH ANY OTHER ERITREAN GROUP.

4. IN SEPARATE ERITREAN ITEM, EPLF ANNOUNCED IN KHARTOUM AUGUST 14 THAT 750 ETHIOPIAN SOLDIERS WERE KILLED AND NINE PERSONNEL CARRIERS WERE DESTROYED IN ERITREA DURING AUGUST 10-12. EPLF SPOKESMAN SAID OPERATIONS CAME WITHIN CONTEXT OF NEW EPLF TACTICS AGAINST ETHIOPIAN OFFENSIVE ON SOUTHERN FRONT.

5. COMMENT: THERE IS LITTLE NEW ON OSMAN'S REMARKS. EPLF CLAIM THAT 750 ETHIOPIANS WERE KILLED IS VAGUE BUT TIME PERIOD COINCIDES WITH LOSS OF AGORDAT. MEANWHILE ALL ERITREAN GROUPS IN KHARTOUM ARE ENGAGED IN TOP-LEVEL SOUL-SEARCHING IN LIGHT OF RECENT ETHIOPIAN SUCCESSES. BOGOSIAN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**TAGS:** PINS, PINT, MOPS, ET, SU, ELF, PLF, EPLF, (OSMAN SALEH SABBE)  
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**Review Markings:**  
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